

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 7-11 have been labeled as --Prior Art--.

Attachment: Three (3) Replacement Drawing Sheets (numbered 5/7 to 7/7, with Figs. 7-11)

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 16-27 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. New claims 28-31 have been added. Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Drawings

The Examiner asserted that Figs. 7-11 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. In response, Applicant has amended Figs. 7-11 so as to be labeled as --Prior Art--. Three (3) Replacement Drawing Sheets (numbered 5/7 to 7/7 and including Figs. 7-11) have been submitted herewith.

Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)

Regarding the IDS filed at the time of filing of the present application, JP 63-132158 listed therein is a typographical error of JP 63-132156 as the Examiner notes. Actually, the Examiner asserts that “JP 63-132158 may be a typographical error of JP 63-153156”, but this seems to be a typographical error by the Examiner.

Further, the Examiner states that the two references JP 63-132156 and JP 59-39352 have been received only in part, and that Figs. 7 and 8 referred to in the background of the art discusses additional art other than JP 63-132156. However, each of the references JP 63-132156 and JP 59-39352 originally includes only 1 or 2 pages in total. Therefore, Applicant believes that a full copy of the cited references was duly submitted. As for the Figs. 7 and 8, Applicant believes that the Examiner has only made a comparison with the drawings of JP 63-132156. Drawings that are different from JP 63-132156 are used for Figs. 7 and 8 for the purpose of making a comparison with the other figures easier, but they still illustrate the subject matter disclosed in JP 63-132156. For example, the “assembling reference surface 901a” as shown in Fig. 7 corresponds to a surface designated by a reference numeral 12 in JP 63-132156.

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner return an initialed PTO form 1449 indicating consideration of the two cited Japanese references.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-15 under §112, 2nd paragraph, as indefinite. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the helpful comments made in this regard in item 4 on pages 3-5 of the Office Action. Applicant has amended the claims in a manner believed to overcome this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-15 under §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 6,098,117 to Ebina et al. (hereinafter Ebina). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection because Ebina fails to disclose all of the elements as set forth and arranged in amended independent claims 1 and 11.

Each one of claims 1 and 11 independently sets forth a tube guide formed with a scooping portion insertion hole into which the ball scooping portion is inserted, wherein an inner shape of the scooping portion insertion hole matches to an outer shape of the ball scooping portion.

The Examiner asserts that Ebina discloses a tubular piece 15 that is a tube guide. However, Ebina fails to disclose a tube guide as now recited in the claims. In contrast to that set forth in each one of claims 1 and 11, Ebina discloses (with reference to Figs. 7 and 8), a tube guide 15 formed with a hole 10a into which a ball scooping portion (an end portion of 3) is not inserted, and an inner shape of the hole does not match to an outer shape of the ball scooping portion.

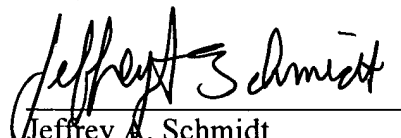
In light of the above, Ebina fails to anticipate claims 1 and 11. Likewise, this reference fails to anticipate the dependent claims 2-10 and 12-15.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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